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Agenda item 113

Programme budget for the biennium 1998–1999

Report of the Fifth Committee

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I. Introduction

1. At its 3rd plenary meeting, on 15 September 1998, the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the General Committee, decided to include in the agenda of its fifty-third session the item entitled "Programme budget for the biennium 1998–1999" and to allocate it to the Fifth Committee.

2. The Fifth Committee considered the item at its 4th to 6th meetings, on 6, 7 and 12 October 1998. Statements and observations made in the course of the Committee's consideration of the item are reflected in the relevant summary records (A/C.5/53/SR.4-6).

3. For its consideration of the item, the Committee had before it the following documents:

(a) Report of the Secretary-General on analysis of savings resulting from the improved overall cost-effectiveness achieved pursuant to the ninth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, including the restructuring of the intergovernmental machinery and the reform of the secretariat, as requested by the General Assembly in its resolution 52/220 of 22 December 1997 and proposals pursuant to General Assembly decision 52/462 of 31 March 1998 (A/52/898 and Corr.1);

(b) Third report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (A/53/7/Add.2).

II. Consideration of draft resolution A/C.5/53/L.6

4. At the 6th meeting, on 12 October 1998, the representative of the Bahamas, and Vice-Chairman of the Committee, and coordinator of informal consultations, introduced and orally corrected a draft resolution entitled "Analysis of savings resulting from the improved overall

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cost-effectiveness achieved pursuant to the ninth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, including the restructuring of the intergovernmental machinery and the reform of the secretariat, as requested by the General Assembly in its resolution 52/220 of 22 December 1997 and proposals pursuant to General Assembly decision 52/462 of 31 March 1998" (A/C.5/53/L.6).

5. At the same meeting, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.5/53/L.6 without a vote (see para. 6).

III. Recommendation of the Fifth Committee

6. The Fifth Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

Analysis of savings resulting from the improved overall cost-effectiveness achieved pursuant to the ninth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, including the restructuring of the intergovernmental machinery and the reform of the secretariat, as requested by the General Assembly in its resolution 52/220 of 22 December 1997 and proposals pursuant to General Assembly decision 52/462 of 31 March 1998

The General Assembly,

Reaffirming its resolution 41/213 of 19 December 1986 and subsequent relevant resolutions,

Recalling its resolutions 51/167 of 15 December 1996 and 52/220 of 22 December 1997 and decision 52/462 of 31 March 1998,

Having considered the report of the Secretary-General on the analysis of savings resulting from the improved overall cost-effectiveness achieved pursuant to the ninth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, including the restructuring of the intergovernmental machinery and the reform of the secretariat,[1]

Having considered the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions,[2]

Emphasizing the need to strengthen the capacity of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, in particular, in priority areas,

1. *Endorses* the proposals of the Secretary-General, on the understanding that the amount to be utilized by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development should not exceed 5,526,600 United States dollars;

2. *Agrees* to the use of the amount of 1,088,000 dollars for the expenses of experts attending, in their personal capacity, expert meetings convened by the Commissions in accordance with paragraph 114 of the document entitled "A Partnership for Growth and Development",[3] on the understanding that:

[1] A/52/898 and Corr.1

[2] A/53/7/Add.2

[3] See A/51/308

(a) It would only involve a one-time expenditure within the framework of the biennium 1998–1999, made possible because of extra resources that have been allocated as a result of underspending;

(b) The financing of experts would not set a precedent regarding the financing from the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development regular budget of the expenses of experts attending, in their personal capacity, expert meetings convened by the Commissions of the Trade and Development Board, in accordance with paragraph 114 of the document entitled "A Partnership for Growth and Development";[3]

(c) Special consideration would be given to the needs of developing countries, in particular, the least developed countries;

3. *Invites* the Trade and Development Board to take a final decision at its forty-fifth session (12–23 October 1998), on the question of the selection, nomination and appointment of experts to participate in the expert meetings of its Commissions, so as to enable the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development secretariat to carry out the foreseen activities without further delay;

4. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session a report on the implementation by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development of the activities financed by the unspent balance referred to in paragraph 1 above, and on how the accomplishments had contributed to strengthening the capacity of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, in particular, in priority areas;

5. *Considers* that significant savings had been achieved by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development as a direct result of decisions of the ninth session of the Conference, including the restructuring of the intergovernmental machinery and the reform of the secretariat;

6. *Regrets* the lack of clear information concerning the savings achieved pursuant to the ninth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, including the restructuring of the intergovernmental machinery of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and the reform of its secretariat, and takes note, in this context, of the indication, in paragraph 8 of the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions,[2] that an amount of 2 million dollars, which is part of the above-mentioned savings, could be traceable to the reduction in the conference-servicing requirements of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development undertaken as a result of the ninth session, and agrees with the Advisory Committee that this information should have been reflected in the report of the Secretary-General;

7. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session, comprehensive information on the savings, including the amount of 2 million dollars referred to above, resulting from the improved overall cost-effectiveness achieved pursuant to the ninth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, including the restructuring of the intergovernmental machinery and the reform of the secretariat, as requested in its resolutions 51/167 and 52/220;

8. *Decides* to continue consideration of this question during the main part of its fifty-fourth session.